

REGULAR MEETING OF THE DEARBORN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Dearborn, Michigan

February 19, 2025

This regular meeting was called to order at 4:21pm by Chairman Saymuah.

Commissioners present: Ramsey Saymuah, Paul Boyce, Mahmoud Tanana, Rene Ziaja,
Commissioners present via Google Meet: Machhadie “Micho” Assi, Mohamed Dabaja, Asma Said (joined 4:48pm)

Commissioners absent: Batoull Haidar, Lamis Srour

Also present: Ali Abazeed (Director of Public Health), Sara Elhasan (Public Health Advisor), Jeremy Brown (Assistant Corporation Counsel), Leslie Herrick (Dearborn City Council President Pro Tem), Mustapha Hammoud (Dearborn City Councilman) and a member of the public.

Chairman Saymuah announced Item II., Introductions and welcome. Commission members then introduced themselves and their environmental interests.

Chairman Saymuah then announced Item III., Approval of January Minutes. The draft minutes being prepared by Mr. Deshpande; Commissioner Boyce as Secretary also took notes during the January meeting and added additional minutes including Commissioner Ziaja’s comment regarding pronoun usage referring to Secretary. Commissioner Saymuah motioned to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Commissioner Ziaja. After a unanimous voice vote in favor, the motion was adopted.

Chairman Saymuah then announced Item IV., Adopt Rules of Procedure. Commissioner Ziaja motioned to adopt Robert’s Rules of Order, seconded by Commissioner Boyce. Commissioner Boyce asked Mr. Brown if there was another set of rules of procedure more appropriate to this body. Mr. Brown stated Robert’s Rules are the standard. Commissioner Boyce stated a copy of Robert’s Rules of Order Made Simple was obtained from the City Clerk’s office and made available to Commissioners. Chairman Saymuah called for a vote. After a unanimous voice vote in favor, the motion was adopted.

Chairman Saymuah then announced Item V., By-Laws. Mr. Brown provided draft by-laws, derived from by-laws of the Zoning Commission of Appeals. Commissioner Ziaja commented on Secretary Duties, Art II Sect 4.i.: “Aids other Commission members as needed in putting motion into correct form for a vote.” assuming this was adherence to Robert’s Rules and that such duties are atypical of the Secretary. Commissioner Ziaja also asked the Commission to

consider operating under the Open Meetings Act, citing Art IV, Sect 1.iii of proposed by-laws. Commissioner Saymauh, being on Planning Commission, explored operations under the Open Meetings Act and gave examples of how the Open Meetings Act governs that commission and how it would impact the Environmental Commission. Mr. Brown clarified communications under the Open Meetings Act. Commissioner Ziaja asked that the commission operate as much as possible per Open Meetings Act. Commissioner Ziaja asked if commissioners could have dearborn.gov email addresses. Mr Abazeed said he would need to check with IT. Commissioner Tanana noted meetings are posted on the city website.

Commissioner Said joined Google Meet at 4:48pm.

Discussion continued on proposed by-laws. Commissioner Boyce addressed the Duties of Secretary, Sect 4.iii and indicated he volunteered as Secretary assuming traditional roles of record keeping. Commissioner Boyce commented Mr. Deshpande stated he would assist in keeping and typing minutes. Roll call, keeping meeting notes/minutes and background documents added to Secretary duties. Under Article III City Staff Support, Sect 2. replace the “Zoning Commission of Appeals” with “Environmental Commission.” Art III, Sect 3. to read “Communications can be sent to Attn: Environmental Commission, % Department of Public Health, City of Dearborn, 16901 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn MI 48126; delivered, mailed or emailed.” (Email address pending, Mr. Abazeed to check with IT.) Under Sect. 4. Commissioner Boyce clarified the process of preparing agenda; who prepares and distributes notices, and posts agendas and minutes on city website; timing of meeting packet materials. Mr. Abazeed drew attention to Art III Sect 5. given vacancy of Environmental Health Manager position. Mr. Abazeed stated that with Mr. Deshpande's departure, the position of Environmental Health Manager would likely not be filled until the end of the calendar year. This vacancy will impact the level of support to commission. Commissioner Assi questioned our role as an advisory group conducting public hearings. Commissioner Boyce moved to table the draft by-laws, seconded by Commissioner Saymauh. After a unanimous voice vote in favor, the motion was adopted.

Commissioner Assi left Google Meet 5:15pm

Chairman Saymauh then announced Item VI., Work Plan. The Chairman recognized Commissioner Boyce as author of the draft Work Plan and asked him to present it. Commissioner Boyce explained how the framework was created and emphasized key wording from enabling ordinance. The Work Plan table was reviewed row by row, asking for commissioner input. Row (b): Commissioner Tanana stated his community involvement best with Dearborn Schools. Commissioner Boyce volunteered to collaborate with Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. Slot to collaborate with Parks & Recreation Commission open; Commissioner Ziaja to check on connection with City Beautiful Commission. Row (c) : During

discussion on Transportation, an example of a shuttle bus to Camp Dearborn used. Mr. Brown was asked if Camp Dearborn fell under scope of work. Mr. Brown stated yes if there was an environmental issue, but noted because of location it fell under another jurisdiction (Milford Township/Oakland Co). Row (d) Commissioners Boyce and Dabaja teamed to cover Solid Waste; Commissioner Dabaja focusing on food waste reduction and composting. Row (e) Commissioner Said volunteered to work on Environmental Risk & Pollution. Row(f) Water, Sewer, Flooding and Rouge River - Chairman Saymuah designated as Lead Commissioner in this area. Row (g) Examples of Sustainable Development, Clean Production, and Environmental Technologies offered. Row (h) Commissioner Ziaja interested in tracking public comment and workshops regarding Public Hearings on Environmental Issues. In the interest of time, Commissioner Boyce moved to table a draft Work Plan, seconded by Commissioner Ziaja. After a unanimous voice vote in favor, the motion was adopted. Rows (i) - (o) not addressed during the meeting.

Chairman Saymuah addressed Item VII., Meeting Schedule. Based on the reduced capability of the Department of Public Health to support the commission due to vacancy of Environmental Health Manager position, Commissioner Saymuah suggested meeting three times a year with committees working between meetings. Mr. Abazeed stated commissions are more effective meeting less often than monthly with work continuing within committees. Commissioner Ziaja expressed that the newly formed commission should meet monthly. Commissioner Boyce suggested a hybrid meeting schedule, a March meeting to finalize By-Laws and Work Plan, then meet quarterly. Chairman Saymuah to follow-up with the commission before the next meeting.

Commissioner Boyce motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Tanana. After a unanimous voice vote in favor, the motion was adopted.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm.

For those that remained in-person, the remainder of the agenda was discussed informally.